As Americans are living longer there is a greater need to conduct state by state health needs of seniors. The America’s Health Ranking Senior Report 2013 Edition by the United Health Foundation reports that about 80 percent of people age 65 or older have one chronic disease and about 50 percent have at least two. The rate of chronic diseases is growing and so too is the portion of the population that is age 65 and over. One out of every eight Americans is a senior and 79 million baby boomers are fast approaching senior status.

The growth in the senior population is not equally distributed among states. The study determines senior population growth projections for a fifteen year span up to 2030. Arizona is expected to experience the most growth with 101 percent increase over fifteen years. Nevada is ranked second with an expected growth in senior population of 89 percent. Florida is third at 88 percent projected growth.

Along with projecting population growth, the study also determines which states will have an estimated improvement or decline in senior health.

The study analyzed and ranked 50 states on different health determinants and outcomes. Determinants include a “high rate of annual dental visits, a high percentage of volunteerism, a low percentage of marginal food insecurity, a high percentage of creditable drug coverage, and ready availability of home health care workers.” Outcomes include “a low rate of hospitalization for hip fractures, a high percentage of seniors who report very good or excellent health, a high prevalence of able-bodied seniors, a low premature death rate, a low prevalence of full-mouth tooth extractions, and few poor mental health days per month.”

If state determinants are higher than state outcomes, the study predicts a strong chance that future ranking will improve and seniors will see increases in health. States with the greatest potential for increasing their future ranking are Vermont, Pennsylvania, and Iowa according to the study.

The report outlines state profile pages with information such as overall ranking, strengths, challenges, and relevant health statistics on a state by state basis. To see your state’s page visit the study at America’s Health Ranking Senior Report 2013 Edition [2].

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